GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:167
ANSWERED ON:10.12.2008
PIRACY IN HIGH SEAS
Jagannath Dr. M.;Yaskhi Shri Madhu Goud

Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a Japanese Ship M.T. Stolt Valor with some Indian sailors on board was hijacked recently by pirates;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the action taken by the Government to secure the release of the Indian sailors;

(d) whether the Government proposes to formulate any strategy to deal with the piracy threat in high seas; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU)

(a) to (e): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (e) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 167 FOR 10.12.2008 REGARDING PIRACY IN HIGH SEAS BY DR. M. JAGANNATH AND SHRI MADHU GOUD YASKHI

(a) to (c): The vessel M.T. Stolt Valor with 18 Indian seafarers on board was hijacked by Somali pirates in the Gulf of Aden on 15th September, 2008. The ship is owned by a Japanese firm and has Hong Kong flag. A series of meetings at various levels were held with associations representing ship owners and seafarers.

A delegation was deputed to Japan to contact the Japanese owner of the vessel to persuade him to make efforts for the early release of the vessel.The negotiations carried out by the Japanese ship owner with the pirates enabled the release of the vessel and the crew.

(d) & (e): Indian Navy warship has been deployed in the Gulf of Aden along the normal route followed by Indian Flagships during passage between Salalah (Oman) and Aden (Yemen). Presently INS Mysore is carrying out the patrol. The presence of Indian Navy warship in this area is significant as Gulf of Aden is a major choke point in the Indian Ocean region and provides access to the Suez Canal through which the sizeable portion of India's trade flows. The presence of Indian Navy in the area is helping to protect Indian sea borne trade and instill confidence in the sea faring community, as well as act as a deterrent for pirates. India's position is that greater coordination is needed under the umbrella of the United Nations so that countries and organizations contributing warships such as North Atlantic Treaty Organistion (NATO), Operation Atlanta of the European Union and warships of individual nations, including India, could coordinate efforts aimed at enhancing the security of these sea lanes.

Further, the international community, having recognized this problem brought this issue up in the Security Council of the United Nations which adopted four resolutions in 2008. India has contacted several countries to support this approach.